



TOWN OF MANSFIELD/MANSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

Public Informational Meeting

Wednesday, October 4, 2006

Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building

Council Chambers

MINUTES

Present: Bill Simpson, Chair, Marc Boyer, Gordon Schimmel, Elizabeth Paterson, Matt Hart, Jeff Smith

Absent: Renee Miller, Anne Rash

Staff: Linda Patenaude, William Hammon

Consultant: Tom Jokubaitis

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mr. Simpson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Educational Consulting Services Information Meeting Minutes

Mr. Simpson started the meeting by stating the meeting was called to inform the audience about the progress being made and asking for any input after the presentation. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Schimmel.

Dr. Schimmel then discussed the history of how the schools have grown since the 1950's when they were built. He pointed out one of the urgent needs was for storage areas. He then turned the meeting on to Dr. Jokubaitis.

Dr. Jokubaitis explained the process by explaining that site visits were done, interviews with teachers and principals were done and data was compared with what the State Dept. of Education had on file. He pointed out that we are still in the beginning stages and that comments were welcome.

Two fundamental considerations are the number of plans and number of services provided with a third consideration being the building code and ADA components.

Dr. Jokubaitis pointed out that enrollment projections showed that the elementary schools showed a projection of 722, in reality there are 725. There are a total of 41 more students enrolled than this time last year.

The schools were set up with classrooms on both sides of the hallway. No special education, no computer labs, no Title I funded remedial services, no libraries. The multi-purpose room was the café, gym and auditorium in one room. Mansfield has accommodated the special services well, but have taken classrooms off line in order to accommodate the change. In some rooms there are two to three special education teachers working simultaneously with youngsters. Some require minimum disruption which is difficult when two to three teachers are teaching at the same time. Some teachers are teaching out storage closets.

Facility needs are roof replacements which are nearing their life span of 20 years. Fundamentals should be done first. Security – two to three elementary schools

and the MMS main office is not at the main entrance. One school, at the entrance is, but it's a small office.

Air quality standards are different than the '50's and the systems can't handle the needs of the schools. Building committee and schools are working with Siemens Corp. to see if there are ways to reduce energy consumption and improve air quality in the schools.

Parking lots not accessible to the main entrance, vehicular traffic is a safety concern for buses and parent drop off.

Recommendations – conduct an existing conditions study. Architect to come and look at all aspects of what needs to be done in the schools (optional and required).

Elementary schools expand library media centers – operating out of regular size classrooms. Today's libraries have media labs, etc. with rooms with movable walls so individual attention is easier.

Electrical issues – brown outs can be issues.

Carpet replacement – 10 classrooms where carpet is worn. Asbestos is involved.

Roof – nearing 20 year life span. Portables classrooms are not durable classrooms. Better on short term basis. There are three sources of energy – electrical, gas and oil needs unified system.

Security – office not located at entrance – downstairs. Portables not connected to main building.

Recommendations – 1999 renovations – study should take place for recommendations. There are multiple entry doors – over 20 – security issues – swipe/key card for staff to enter yet keep the building secure. Choral room should be renovated.

Long term should be done with timelines and estimated costs so it can be projected out.

The meeting was turned over to Dr. Schimmel so he could go thru the slides of conditions in the elementary schools and the middle school. Slides were also shown of Chaplin Elementary School which was built ten or so years ago. Slides of the computer lab and the library linked together with a glass wall, storage, etc.

3. Comments from the Audience

Mr. Simpson opened up the floor for questions and/or comments.

A question was asked about the usual size of elementary school computer lab and library. Mr. Simpson asked if it was for wish list or renovation. The question was rephrased as to if new school. Dr. Jokubaitis answered that there was no guidelines. Best guess incorporated computer lab with the library, 2800 square feet would be adequate.

A question was raised about the roofs approaching end of life span – construction reimburse from State – any other State funds available for funds. State will fund roofs after 20 years old. Roofs wear out before you will repair but State will deduct difference from previous project unless engineering documentation is received displaying flaws in design. State will reimburse all code items at the current rate of reimbursement of construction projects. Doing the existing condition study will weigh all the alternatives. Mr. Smith noted that reimbursement rate is one of the highest in the state about 75%.

Mr. Simpson covered the timeline for the committee process. The committee was formed in 2002 with the completion to be in 2010. Series of meetings to concur with feedback involved.

Comment – seems that all the schools need some facility changes. Concern is that there are people who are very selective into what school their child goes into. Wherever a family lives the child should have an equal opportunity for a good education because the taxpayers in the Town pay top dollar for a superb education. With building modifications being done he would caution the building committee to do nice things for every school so that no school comes out “shining like a rose” so that “no school should be left behind”. Mr. Simpson replied that “there are no schools that are first among equals”. He then turned over to Dr. Schimmel for further comment. Dr. Schimmel reported that they have been very conscious about not putting one school ahead of the others. Mr. Simpson stated that the concept of sloped roofs has returned. Dr. Schimmel reported that approximately 21 years ago the Middle School roof was pitched.

School Readiness – Early Childhood Coalition – one kindergarten in one school to three in others – work in coordination with the early childhood education. If space is added for library space are the classrooms adequate for early childhood. Dr. Schimmel reported that six classrooms were funded 20 years ago from Eastconn for special education, agreed that anytime the space was needed for special education, it would be done. The existing condition study would help answer those questions. Dr. Jokubaitis stated the square foot for early childhood was approximately 1200 square feet. Mayor Paterson stated that the direction to the architect would be to look at size and use of classroom space.

Extensive codes and guidelines for new construction. New construction or replacement materials be considered that are chemically inactive as currently available or cost effective exchanges. The acoustic properties are just as important in classrooms as public spaces and lighting should be as natural as possible. Mr. Simpson replied that this has come up at our last meeting and we are encouraged to embrace and are looking in that direction.

Heating proposal for MMS indicates that there is some gas, electric and some oil. Bonding on the ballot for the whole school. Looking at how it fits into the scheme of things of unifying the whole system so that it's more affordable than it is now. Mr. Smith reported that the legislature has authorized a special grant for us to build boilers (will have to be done again in June). Electric heat there and there are no boilers. Alternative fuels are being looked into. There is no system to send hot water out to all the rooms. Major expense. The first time the state has said that would be willing to help. Heating primarily by electric. Dr. Jokubaitis stated that if you take

electric heat off line this enables the infrastructure to function without new or additional electrical system so you're not calling on the existing service so one should help the other.

Comment is that heating and cooling of MMS is still up in the air as to what will really happen. Thinks it's a little presumptuous to ask the voters to spend money if you don't know what's actually going to happen. Mr. Smith replied that the State expects you to put money in place before they step up to the plate. Plan is to pipe the place and have engineers write a plan as to what we are going to do. Very expensive project and that's why it hasn't been done in the past when there was no State reimbursement. The fact that we can now get State reimbursement has put it in our reach. Current systems are very noisy and very disruptive to learning. Heat pumps given to the Town at half the cost 10 years ago which is the lifespan. Separate project from this project and the Siemens project. Facility to put boilers in may or will have to be built.

Plumbing and construction – how is it going to be done with a minimum interruption to the learning process. Dr. Schimmel replied it will be done in the non-heating season and after school hours. Mr. Smith reported that the engineers will run the pipes down the middle of the hallway and stay out of the classrooms.

MMS Piping – is current plan thinking of 2 or 4 pipe system. Involved in school projects in other areas attempted to save money by putting a 2 pipe system in with a lot of problems getting the rooms to the temp they want. A 4 pipe system gives a lot greater variability to adjust the rooms to the right temp. Mr. Hammon replied original study for heat only which is a 2 pipe system, but a study is being done for the 4 pipe system.

Dr. Schimmel reported that we don't have all the answers but we've waited a long time to take advantage of the opportunity. Concerns are well founded. Know enough to satisfy the State concern and we have public support. Then it will be studied and see where it leads. One problem is that it we have to project out so far in advance with unpredictable costs of building materials it's sometimes a shot in the dark. Voters need to understand that. There is some vulnerability that we cannot anticipate.

Comment was made that the Mayor and Council made a guarantee to the Town that they would have a public hearing some time in October to talk about the bonding questions. Mayor Paterson reported that it was being scheduled and would be in the near future. Concern was made about it needing to be well-publicized. Town Manager Matt Hart stated that there would be at least two at the Town Hall, one at the Senior Center and potentially one at the Community Center.

Mr. Simpson introduced the committee members that were present and mentioned the ones that were not present.

Concern was made about not having any citizens on the committee. It was pointed out that Marc Boyer, Renee Miller and Anne Rash were on the Committee.

4. Adjournment

Mr. Simpson adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

L. Patenaude

Capital Projects and Personnel Assistant